The One We Worship

Psalm19:1-6

April 9, 2017

Do we truly know the One we worship? The God we adore is infinite in every aspect, far surpassing our limited human intellect. In one sense, it is impossible to fully know Him. Yet in another, we can indeed know Him—and we must. Our knowledge of God comes from three primary sources.

I. Knowing by Instinct

Among all creatures, only human beings can sense and know God. This is because we were created in His image. God is spirit, and although we have physical bodies, we were created as spiritual beings, able to sense and know Him.

Of all the animals, only humans possess the instinct to worship God. What proves our humanity is not language, the use of fire, tools, or upright posture—it is worship. According to materialistic evolution, humanity is the pinnacle of evolution. Yet, contrary to that theory, the pinnacle creature—the human—possesses a spiritual sense, worshiping an unseen God beyond scientific observation.

Our knowledge of God is thus a built-in capacity, programmed at creation—something we can only call instinct. Moreover, God still reveals Himself through what we call nature. Some feel God when gazing at the heavens, as the psalmist did. Many Japanese feel spiritual awe when entering deep mountains, beholding great trees, or standing before waterfalls.

Our God is in nature, encompasses nature, and speaks through it. (Romans 1:19-20; Ephesians 4:6; Acts 17:28). Through nature we can know the basic qualities of God—His eternal glory. Jesus also pointed to the flowers of the field and the birds of the air, teaching us to know God through them (Matthew 6:26-34).

II. Knowing through Scripture

Humanity can also know God through the Bible, His written revelation. The Bible is His self-disclosure, recording His plan and acts of salvation. Most of our intellectual knowledge of God comes through Scripture.

Instinct alone gives only the most basic awareness. Thus, peoples without the Bible possess very little knowledge of God, and much of it is mistaken. Yet among the nations, the Japanese have preserved their human instincts well, maintaining a surprisingly keen sense of God. Once this instinct is coupled with biblical understanding, it can form a solid foundation for true knowledge of God.

Through Scripture, we learn of God the Creator, of human sin, of His love and holiness, of His plan of salvation, of the election of Israel, of Christ's coming and His death on the cross. We learn of eternal life and even gain insight into the future of ourselves and the world.

The key is to read Scripture—and to understand it correctly. Much of Western Christian theology has strayed from or misinterpreted Scripture. Correcting this may well be the role of us Japanese Christians. If not, Christianity risks remaining nothing more than a selfish, distorted religion of Westerners.

III. Knowing through Experience

A third essential way of knowing God is through experience. We come to know Him by living in reliance upon Him, as the Creator revealed in Scripture. When we trust Him in daily life, walking with Him consistently, we build experiential knowledge of God.

Practically, this means obeying biblical teachings, not dismissing them as "too difficult" or "impossible," but practicing them in prayerful dependence on God's help. Then His aid, strength, and encouragement become tangible experiences. As we rely on Him, He responds to our trust, and we come to know Him through lived reality. This experiential knowledge, layered upon instinct and Scripture, forms an unshakable foundation.

Strong Christians are those who, even if their experiences seem small, steadily accumulate them day by day. It can be likened to a healthy parent–child relationship: just as a child naturally relies on a parent, we live by relying on God.

Therefore, let us gain firm knowledge of the One we worship and adore.